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Chaos / BISAC At 20: Where Are the Librarians?

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"gripe" from Ms. Kate Herzog. This book does state specifically the source of the information. I cannot check any further, as the editor involved is no longer with us. However, it is truly a "second edition." In a second edition, the background stays the same, and the technical details are brought up to date. In the 1991 second edition, we retained the background

information from the 1986 edition, and brought the technical information up to date.

Even though we concentrate our efforts on the industrial market, we wish to cooperate fully with the bibliographic needs of the libraries. Therefore, beginning with our Fall 1994 schedule, we will use the "CIP Data Sheet for Reprint

Editions" for those books based upon government-sponsored research. I regret that we did not use this form in the past, but we did not know that such a form existed, until we investigated Ms. Herzog's complaint.

I hope this will solve all future problems.

VENDOR RESPONSE: (Submitted by **Matt Nauman**, Marketing Manager and **Celia Wagner**, Approval Systems Manager, Blackwell North America, Inc.)

Kate Herzog raises a very good point. We agree that information about the history of this title should be added to the announcement slip. In fact, our longstanding policy has been to identify titles which are reprints of government documents, or even reprints of books pub-

lished but never distributed through the trade as "First Trade Edition." We also classify titles which are obvious photocopies as such.

We do feel that making this information about a title known is the most we can do. To restrict the availability of a

title would penalize libraries who need it regardless of its non-trade printing history. It is not for us to say why publishers sometimes follow this practice. From our standpoint, we try to convey the accurate information to our customers while providing the best service possible. ☛

Chaos

BISAC At 20: Where Are the Librarians?

by **Sandra K. Paul** (President, SKP Associates)

Although I'm reluctant to admit it to EVERYONE, my "child is all growned up." As the person often referred to as the "mother of BISAC," I will confess to just a few of you reading this, that the meeting of folks in the world of the book that kicked off the creation of the Book Industry Systems Advisory Committee was held on October 4, 1974 — TWENTY YEARS ago. In thinking about BISAC and its sister organization, SISAC (the Serials Industry ...), I realized how differently the library community has made its needs heard and how differently it has had a role in establishing the direction for each of these organizations.

At the October 26, 1994 SISAC meeting, publisher **Susan Malawski** (from **John Wiley**) turned the Chair over to librarian **Joan Griffith** (University of New Mexico). Past SISAC Chairs include librarians **Tina Feick** and **Betty Landesman**. There has never been a librarian Chair of BISAC. This column looks at some of the history behind librarian participation in these Committees and its implications for the future.

Books vs. Serials

One of the reasons that the role of librarians is so much greater in SISAC

relates to some significant differences between publishers' perceptions of the book vs. the serial acquisitions of the library community. Publishers of scientific, technical, medical and professional journals KNOW that the library community IS their market. They send journals directly to libraries; they feel the effects of library funding cuts directly; they understand that subscription agents would not be placing orders for journals were they not ordered and renewed by libraries. Book publishers, on the other hand, don't know where the books they sell to wholesalers are then shipped — to bookstores or to libraries. AND, since they DO see their own relatively significant direct sales to bookstores vs. relatively small to

nonexistent direct sales to libraries, they start BELIEVING that they are selling to a class of customer known as "wholesaler," rather than to library and bookstore customer. It is no wonder that **Carol Nemeyer** (with her MLS and later to become President of ALA), when she worked for the **Association of Ameri-**

can Publishers (AAP), thought it appropriate to drop into the President's office regularly to say, "Librarians bought over a billion dollars worth of books this year," and walk out. Book publishers have to be reminded that they do have library customers.

Another difference is based on the fact that scientific, technical, medical, professional journals are the focal point of SISAC's activities. When SISAC was formed, consideration was given to having its scope cover popular magazines as well. However, investigation of that idea resulted in the quick understanding that librarians would have NO influence on the item identification, bar coding, or the business communications for consumer publications — they represent too little of the market for those publications. Had SISAC included the publishers and distributors of those serials, library community influence would be considerably less than it is today.

Finally, BISAC and SISAC policies may have influenced the ability of librarians to participate in each committee. SISAC offers lower minutes subscription (read DUES) prices to not-for-profit organizations and a still lower price for individual librarians who pay by personal check and have the minutes sent to their homes. BISAC offers only a flat rate for subscriptions to its minutes, the same rate SISAC charges for-profit organizations. Librarians active in the ALCTS Serials Section found the formation of SISAC of such significance, they requested and achieved the appointment and support of one or more ALCTS liaisons each year. BISAC has a liaison with the AAP/ALCTS Joint Committee, but that person is appointed by BISAC, not the AAP or ALCTS.

Bookstores vs. Libraries

Another reason for the difference in the two Committees is the needs of bookstores vs. libraries when it comes to business functions for books. Libraries tend to buy their books from wholesalers; to keep what they purchased; and to bar code each of their books with a copy-specific bar code needed in their circulation system. Bookstores tend to buy most of the initial printing of a new title from the publisher, to return it by the carload if/once it is not selling, and to demand that the publisher provide the type of bar

coding that is appropriate for their point-of-sale terminals and inventory control systems.

When BISAC's predecessor ad hoc committees were formed, the ISBN Data Transmission Committee was given, as its first goal, replacing the cartons of computer-generated paper publishers received as Purchase Orders from their retail and wholesale customers. Booksellers and book wholesalers dominated the customer side of the Committee and retained that dominance when this Committee was joined with the ISBN Publicity Committee to form BISAC in 1980. Having as its first Chair the head of data processing at Baker & Taylor (**Tom Brady**) and its second holding the same position at Brodart (**David Wolverton**), there certainly was knowledge at BISAC that libraries buy books. However, these wholesalers were more concerned about their business communications with their publishing suppliers, than with their library customers, for whom they had each developed their own proprietary communication formats. And the publishing participants were unaware of their sales to libraries, as described above.

Despite these generalities, we BISAC folks did acknowledge the need for librarians to participate in BISAC early on. **Jim Rush** was the first library participant. An employee of OCLC (under one of its much earlier names) at that time, he made some of us believe that he could and did represent ALL of the members of that constituency. (During his first years on the Committee he arranged my first trip to OCLC — a most exciting experience for someone who had only a very small computer at her company). When OCLC finally withdrew its active support from BISAC's Subcommittee activity, they were never really replaced. **New York Public Library** sent a person to meetings for a short period of time. A few libraries and library systems vendors subscribe to the minutes, but they are not active on Subcommittees.

The Future

Both BISAC and SISAC make standards happen through the activities of their members. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and bar coding standards do not fall from the heavens to awaiting fingertips. They are designed, debated, and tested by individuals and must meet

the needs of those volunteers and their institutions. If the constituency designing, debating and testing book standards DOES NOT include librarians, there can be no assurance that we are, in fact, meeting library needs. The 1994-1995 BISAC Chairperson, **Kent Freeman**, of **Ingram Customer Systems**, is determined that will not happen.

BISAC is reconsidering the structure of its subscription rates, in order to provide a rate an individual, a small organization, and a not-for-profit can afford. Once those rates are finalized, I can tell you about them in this column (and at the **Charleston Conference**), but I need you to carry the word throughout libraryland, so that they will be used. AND, even more of concern, librarians and library systems vendors must GET OFF THEIR DUFFS and participate. We have seen the first jointly developed EDI format — a Purchase Order for BOOKS and SERIALS. It was developed by the librarians, systems vendors, wholesalers and publishers active in the Canadian SISAC organization, CSISAC. They are now looking at a Purchase Order Acknowledgement for both types of materials. BISAC has a full list of EDI transactions sets for books which are ripe for expansion to serials.

At an ALA preconference on EDI for library systems vendors two years ago, we were told by those present that they could not address the BISAC and SISAC EDI formats until two conditions were met: a library subset of the formats is in place; and EDI can be sent and received on the Internet. TODAY, organizations are testing the Internet Engineering Task Force's draft protocol for sending EDI on the Internet; it should be an approved standard by the end of 1994. In a workshop before last June's ALA, development of the library subset of the Purchase Order began. However, if we wait to address each transaction set in such workshops, we are looking far beyond the year 2000 to have the full suite of those now in existence. Instead, we need **ACTIVE LIBRARY PARTICIPATION** in BISAC.

Spread the word. Join. Participate. Contact BISAC at 4164812@mcimail.com, 212-929-1393 (phone) or 212-989-7542 (fax). We even accept mail at 160 Fifth Ave., N.Y., NY 10010. Do it today! ☛